MIDDLEBURY

BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

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RIPTON, VERMONT

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13, 2022

BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

Ripton, Vermont
Established 1920

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The Wild Geese

Horseback on Sunday morning,
harvest over, we taste persimmon
and wild grape, sharp sweet
of summer's end. In time's maze
over the fall fields, we name names
that went west from here, names
that rest on graves. We open
a persimmon seed to find the tree
that stands in promise,
pale, in the seed's marrow.
Geese appear high over us,
pass, and the sky closes. Abandon,
as in love or sleep, holds
them to their way, clear,
in the ancient faith: what we need
is here. And we pray, not
for new earth or heaven, but to be
quiet in heart, and in eye
clear. What we need is here.

—Wendell Berry from Collected Poems 1957–1982

Middlebury Bread Loaf
School *of* English